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Mark Zuckerberg & Jack Dorsey Testimony Transcript Senate Tech Hearing November 17



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Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on November 17. They were questioned on speech moderation policies. Read the transcript of the full big tech hearing below.



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politicians or average citizens. Nobody in a free society has ever had that responsibility before. And the question is, how do you control that responsibility? I don't want the government to take over the job of telling America what tweets are legitimate and what are not. I don't want the government deciding what content to take up and put down. I think we're all in that category. But when you have companies that have the power of governments, have far more power than traditional media outlets, something has to give. And I'm hoping in this hearing today that we can find a baseline of agreement.

Mr. Graham: (10:41 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8jWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=641.02](https://www.rev.com/transcript)

That Section 230 needs to be changed. That my bias would be to allow the industry itself, to develop best business practices to protect the sites against terrorism and child exportation and other concerns. That we look at the business practices of these companies through a health prism. That some of their practices need to be modified because it can become addictive. We thought tobacco was a good thing for a long time to the point that we sent it to our soldiers in combat. The more we realized about the addictive nature of tobacco, the more we changed our mind about telling the public about the product.

Mr. Graham: (11:22 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8jWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=682.95](https://www.rev.com/transcript)

So whether or not we do that with social media platforms, that these platforms can be addictive if used too often. I don't know if need to go there, but I do know that Section 230 exists today is got to give. And I think there's Republican and Democrat concern about the power that's being used by social media outlets to tell us what we can see and what we can. What's true and what's not to the extent that Section 230 in my view has to be rewritten. So that's the purpose of this hearing is to find a way forward to bring about change. And when it comes to social media platforms and Section 230, change is going to come. With that, Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Blumenthal: (12:10 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8jWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=730.1](https://www.rev.com/transcript)

Thank you very, very much Mr. Chairman. And thank you for having this hearing today. And I look forward to cooperating with you not only in this hearing, but in the up coming Congress on our own EARN IT bill, on other measures, because you're absolutely right. Change must come to social media. The fact is we meet today in an unprecedented and precarious moment in American history. Daily, the president shocks our conscience and shakes the very foundations of our democracy using a powerful megaphone, social media. The president has used this microphone to spread vicious falsehoods and an apparent attempt to overturn the will of voters. Every day, he posts new threats and conspiracy theories about mail-in ballots and voting machines, lies that contradict his own election security officials and his lawyers. He uses this megaphone potentially to block a peaceful transition of power. Now, Mr. Zuckerberg and Mr. Dorsey, you have built terrifying tools of persuasion and manipulation with power far exceeding the robber barons of the last Gilded Age.

Senator Blumenthal: (13:35 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8jWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=815.13](https://www.rev.com/transcript)

You have profited hugely by strip mining data about our private lives and promoting hate speech and voter suppression. You have an immense civic and moral responsibility to ensure these instruments of influence do not irreparably harm our country. I recognize the steps. They're really baby steps that you've taken so far. The destructive incendiary misinformation is still a scourge on both your platforms and on others. In fact, Google has been given a pass from today's hearing. It's been rewarded by this committee for its timidity, doing even less than you have done to live up to its responsibilities. The recent actions you have taken fact are simply to check the truth of what appears on platform. Often it is voter suppression and incendiary malicious misinformation. And you've tried to slow its insidious spread. That's not censorship, that's moral and civic responsibility.

Senator Blumenthal: (14:48 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8jWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=888.87](https://www.rev.com/transcript)

Now, I believe and I hope the chairman agrees that a series of hearings on big tech is long overdue on antitrust issues, on privacy concerns and Section 230. I have urged, in fact, a breakup of tech giants because they've misused their bigness and power.

Breaking off, for example, WhatsApp and Instagram. Rigorous privacy protection, because consumers should have control over their own data. And indeed Section 230 reform, meaningful reform, including even possible repeal in large part because their immunity is way too broad and victims of their harms deserve a day in court. But this hearing is certainly not the serious proceeding that we need. It may become a political sideshow, a public tar and feathering. My colleagues seem to want to ignore the foreign disinformation campaigns intended to interfere in our democracy and calls for murder of FBI director Ray and Dr. Fauci. What we've seen here are fighting words and hate speech that certainly deserve no free expression protection.

Senator Blumenthal: (16:24 (https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=984.08)

The fact is that the purpose of today's hearing seems as much to bully or brow beat you Mr. Zuckerberg and Mr. Dorsey from taking the more responsible action by threatening cuts to Section 230. Censorship is really a misnomer for this hearing. What you've done is to label and to fact check to avoid amplifying misinformation and to in effect impose those labels to alert people that what they are consuming may misinform them. And Facebook took down ads for Biden in Michigan and the ACLU in Colorado for mistaken information about voting. In short, there was action that affected both sides. I have fought for Section 230 reform for 16 years. From my time as Connecticut's attorney general, when I took on the scourge of registered sex offenders grooming children on Facebook and MySpace. With Senator Portman, I have led passage of the only successful revision so far to Section 230 to Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act known as SESTA.

Senator Blumenthal: (17:52 (https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1072.27)

And chairman Graham and I have authored the only bill to reform Section 230 that has actually moved out of the committee. The EARN IT Act passed this committee unanimously. Change is going to come, no question. Change is on the way and I intend to bring aggressive and targeted reform to Section 230. But I am not, nor should we be on this committee interested in being a member of the speech police. There are real harms and real victims here. And in some ways, this hearing is a betrayal of those real harms and the real victims of them. Those harms have been caused by big tech because you have failed your responsibility as have others in this industry. I want to see real reform that will enable these abuses to be reformed because your platforms have embraced abuse and weaponized child predators, violent white supremacists and human traffickers.

Senator Blumenthal: (19:07 (https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1147.84)

And I've heard heart wrenching stories from victims. You've set back civil rights protections for Muslim Americans who live in fear of armed militias organized by private online groups. You have setback consumers and competition making that kind of antitrust action very, very important. The American public deserves and demands real reform and accountability, national consumer privacy rules, antitrust principles that curb predatory power and reforms the Section 230 that stops shutting the courthouse door to victims. I look forward to an opportunity for real change, and I think you can meet this moment by put in your power and your money on the right side of history. Thanks Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Graham: (20:10 (https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1210.88)

Well, thank you. A lot to unpack there. Senator Blumenthal, it's been great to work with. I'll continue to work with you. If we keep control of the committee, Senator Grassley would be the chairman next year. And I would encourage him to have the hearings that Senator Blumenthal referenced. That this is a ongoing conversation to get it right to the extent that we can get it right. Mr. Dorsey from Twitter, are you with us, Mr. Dorsey?

Senator, I do.

Mr. Graham: (39:12 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-

Mr. Dorsey?

Mr. Dorsey: (39:14 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-

Yes.

Mr. Graham: (39:14 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-

Thank you. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Blumenthal: (39:19 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-

Thanks Mr. Chairman. Let me bring this down to very practical terms. We're in the middle of another election. This election in Georgia could determine, in fact, which party controls the United States Senate. I'm concerned that both of your companies are in fact backsliding or retrenching, that you are failing to take action against dangerous disinformation, exactly the same kind of voter suppression tactics that existed in the last election and that you are, in fact, reducing content modification. Fighting words and hate speech in the last election could inflame violence and send poll workers into hiding, discourage people from coming to the polls. We have to expect the same kinds of malign tactics. In fact, they are already visible. I'm going to ask, Mr. Chairman, that these posts and tweets be entered into the record, if there's no objection, that are aimed at de-legitimizing the election in January. My question to you is will you commit to the same kind of robust content modification playbook in this coming election, including fact-checking, labeling, reducing the spread of misinformation, and other steps, even for politicians in the runoff elections ahead?

Mr. Zuckerberg: (41:10 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-

Senator, our policy is to have a similar approach in the upcoming Georgia special elections that we took during the general election.

Senator Blumenthal: (41:21 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-

Mr. Dorsey?

Mr. Dorsey: (41:23 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-

Yes, we do. We intend to learn from all of our experience with this election and bring all that learning going forward to make it more robust.

Senator Blumenthal: (41:32 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-

During the past election, there was rampant disinformation on social media in Spanish speaking sites, repeating Q Anon conspiracies and false claims of election rigging. In my view, you need to do better. Will you commit to taking steps to improve content moderation for Spanish speaking communities before the Georgia runoff?

Mr. Zuckerberg: (42:07 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript->

https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=2527.7)

Senator, this is something that we are already working on and worked on ahead of the general election. We have multiple fact-checkers who focus on Spanish as a language. We made sure that we translated our voter information center into Spanish, which we showed at the top of Facebook and Instagram to everyone who uses those products in Spanish and in the US. Those are a couple of the steps that we've taken. We're certainly committed to focusing on this.

Mr. Dorsey: (42:40 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript->

https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=2560.86)

Yes, we will in partnership with [inaudible 00:42:44] civil rights groups.

Senator Blumenthal: (42:46 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript->

https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=2566.61)

I'd like to know, and perhaps you could submit to me within one week, what additional steps you're going to take because this Georgia runoff is underway. As I've indicated, I've seen a backsliding and retrenchment that is very deeply troubling that has enabled the spread of this disinformation, the restarting of certain algorithms, for example, that promote or amplify misinformation is very, very troubling. I think I want to know within a week, what additional steps we are taking to enhance the efforts to stop this kind of amplification and spread. Let me ask about Facebook community standards, which ban language that quote incites or facilitates serious violence. As you know, on November 5th, Steve Bannon, in a Facebook live video called for beheadings of Dr. Fauci and FBI Director Wray for not acting more favorably toward President Trump. Twitter banned Bannon for these remarks. You removed the video, Mr. Zuckerberg. But on Thursday, you reportedly told Facebook employees that Bannon had not violated enough policies that he should be banned from Facebook. My question to you is how many times is Steve Bannon allowed the call for the murder of government officials before Facebook suspends his account?

Mr. Zuckerberg: (44:31 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript->

https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=2671.16)

Senator, as you say, the content in question did violate our policies and we took it down. Having a content violation does not automatically mean your account gets taken down, and the number of strikes varies depending on the type of offense. So if people are posting terrorist content or child exploitation content, then the first time that they do it, then we will take down their account. For other things, it's multiple. I'd be happy to follow up afterwards. We try not to disclose these...

Senator Blumenthal: (45:05 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript->

https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=2705)

[crosstalk 00:45:05] his account.

Mr. Zuckerberg: (45:06 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript->

https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=2706.46)

Sorry, I didn't hear that.

Senator Blumenthal: (45:08 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript->

https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=2708.3)

Will you commit to taking down that account, Steve Bannon's account?

Mr. Zuckerberg: (45:13 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript->

https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=2713.05)

Senator Feinstein: (59:10 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

So when the tweet initially came in, how long was it before you quote updated it?

Mr. Dorsey: (59:20 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

We didn't update it. We put a label on it, pointing to the broader conversation. Our goal is to connect people with more information around what's happening with the election. That occurred anywhere from five minutes to 30 minutes, but as quickly as we can.

Senator Feinstein: (59:42 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

Thank you, is 30 minutes the maximum time?

Mr. Dorsey: (59:46 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

I don't know. We can get you that information [crosstalk 00:59:48].

Senator Feinstein: (59:48 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

Would you? I'm interested in this. Does misinformation about the results of an election and voter fraud relate to civic integrity? Why or why not?

Mr. Dorsey: (01:00:04 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

Yes, it does. We also label those tweets that would indicate whether fraud was happening. Again, we connect those to larger conversations on platform. So we want to provide context here. That is our goal, providing more context, providing more information.

Senator Feinstein: (01:00:23 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

Okay. Now a specific question, and I'm not sure actually what the answer to this should be, but on November 7, president Trump tweeted and I quote, "I won this election by a lot." Obviously, that's not true. President Trump lost the election. The warning label that Twitter is applied to the tweet says, and I quote, "Official sources may not have called the race when this was tweeted." Do you believe that label goes far enough to prevent the tweet's harms when the tweet is still visible and not accurate?

Mr. Dorsey: (01:01:03 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

I do because it's not just the surface level label. It points to a collection of news articles of information and conversation that gives you an expansion on what's happening with the election.

Senator Feinstein: (01:01:17 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

I guess you see my concerns are that these tweets arouse people. It seems to me that the entity that runs this operation ought to have an understanding that when there is a major situation, that the tweets can play a unique role in either reassuring or stirring people up to unacceptable levels. Could you comment on that?

Mr. Dorsey: (01:01:51 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=3711.72))

Well, I agree in [inaudible 00:26:54]. I know our policy is focused on misleading information around the election and the civic process to provide greater context, to provide additive information so that people can make decisions around what's happening with the election. That is three phases. That's the run-up to the election, that's Election Day, and also the phase we're in right now. Post-election. So our policies and enforcement are focused on providing more information and more context to people in those three phases.

Senator Feinstein: (01:02:27 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=3747.47))

Well, let me give you a specific. On November 7, President Trump tweeted this, "I won this election by a lot." That's obviously not true. President Trump lost the election. The warning label that Twitter has applied to the tweet says, and I quote, "Official sources may not have called the race when this was tweeted." Now, here's the question. Does that label do enough to prevent the tweet's harms when the tweet is still visible and is not accurate?

Mr. Dorsey: (01:03:04 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=3784.24))

I believe it's really important that we show people a broader context, and that is the intention of the label. It is not just text below a tweet. It is a link to connect to a much larger conversation and news articles across the spectrum.

Senator Feinstein: (01:03:22 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=3802.32))

Well, give me an example of what would have to happen before the situation would warrant a stronger response?

Mr. Dorsey: (01:03:33 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=3813.16))

Well, we did have stronger responses during Election Day and the week after where we did put an interstitial, meaning that you had to click through to see the content of the tweet and it limited spread for anything that went against our civic integrity policy, including premature calls to election results.

Senator Feinstein: (01:03:58 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=3838.42))

Well, let me give you one more. On November 12, President Trump tweeted a conspiracy theory that 2.7 million votes for him were deleted. The warning label that Twitter has applied to that tweet said, "This claim about election fraud is disputed." Now here's the question. I think it is a tough issue. Do you believe this label does enough to prevent the tweet's harms when the tweet is still visible? It's a highly emotional situation, but the tweet has no factual basis.

Mr. Dorsey: (01:04:37 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=3877.82))

But the tweet has a link to more information, to more conversation and more context that informs the situation what's happening. So I do believe that connecting people to the larger conversation, giving them more context is the right path here.

Senator Feinstein: (01:04:57 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>-editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=3897.03))

But they have to move to solicit that contact, right? It's not contained as an addendum to the original tweet.

Thank you, Senator Whitehouse?

Sheldon Whitehouse: (02:37:09 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9429.49\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9429.49))

Thank you, Chairman. Gentlemen, let me start with just a moments history to give some context to my questions. When the tobacco industry discovered that its product was deadly, it responded to that news with a systematized program of denying that set of facts. The upshot for the tobacco industry was not great. It was found in federal court have been engaged in massive fraud and was put under court order to cease its fraudulent behavior. At around the same time, the fossil fuel industry began to run into a similar problem regarding the effects of its product and it picked up the tobacco industry scheme kind of where it left off, including using some of the same individuals, some of the same entities, many of the same methods as the tobacco industry's denial operation.

Sheldon Whitehouse: (02:38:14 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9494.17\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9494.17))

These are persistent, highly motivated, very well-funded and complex information operations, not unlike a hostile intelligence service would run, and they are quite secretive. And we're now seeing a new form, I guess you'd call it election denial, happening around our country right now. So that's the background that I come at this from seeing and I'm wondering if each of you see a difference between individual error and basically mass disinformation. Is there a difference between odd people with fringe views who offer personal opinions and an orchestrated plan of deliberate misinformation or disinformation that is driven by motivated interests, whether foreign or domestic?

Mr. Zuckerberg: (02:39:11 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9551.39\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9551.39))

Senator, I absolutely think that there's a difference and you can see it in the patterns of use on the platforms. And in our policies and operations, we view these coordinated, inauthentic behavior operations networks of fake and sometimes combining with real accounts to push out a message, but make it seem like it's coming from a different place than it is, or it might be more popular than it is. This is what we saw the Internet Research Agency out of Russia do in 2016. And since then, a number of other governments and private organizations, including some companies like what you've mentioned, have engaged in this behavior.

Mr. Zuckerberg: (02:39:58 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9598.79\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9598.79))

Now, the good news is that I think that the industry has generally gotten its systems to be a lot more sophisticated to defend against that in the last several years. It's a combination of AI systems that we've built to find networks of accounts that aren't really behaving quite the way that a normal person would coupled with large numbers of content reviewers, sometimes with expertise in counter terrorism or counter-intelligence. And then some signal sharing, whether it's with the intelligence community, law enforcement, different groups that have expertise in different areas and with other tech platforms. But this is a big effort on, I think, all of our sides to make sure that we can defend against this kind of interference. And I think we are getting better and better at it.

Sheldon Whitehouse: (02:40:49 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9649.8\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=9649.8))

Well, let me encourage you to persist. As you know, the last time you were here, you were asked about advertising paid for on Facebook denominated in rubles, which was not a very sophisticated scheme to be able to penetrate. But Facebook was unable to penetrate it and your upgrade from that original setup was simply to allow a shell corporation to intermediate between the real actor and not. So I encourage you to continue to try to make sure that real voices are what are heard on Facebook. Mr. Dorsey, let

Senator Coons: (03:29:36 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

Thank you for that answer. I do want to follow up because just facially, it seemed to me that this was a violation of your own call to arms policy. But I look forward to that conversation. Mr. Dorsey, if I might, at a House Energy Committee hearing, I think it was two years ago, you committed to something that I was just discussing with Mr. Zuckerberg, an independent civil rights audit. But in your case, of Twitter. The audit released by Facebook in July has proven invaluable-

Senator Coons: (03:30:03 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

... Twitter, and the audit released by Facebook in July has proven invaluable to bringing sunlight to some key areas in which Facebook does need to improve. Will you follow through in your commitment and commission to this independent audit of Twitter?

Mr. Dorsey: (03:30:15 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

So we work with civil rights groups all over the country and around the world to get feedback. We're in constant conversation with them, and we do believe that being more transparent and making our transparency report a lot more robust, which today we still have some gaps, is important for any entity to audit independently of us. We believe that's important, because an audit like that could take away from the work that we need to do. We'd rather provide the information in a raw format so that people can do that work.

Senator Coons: (03:30:51 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

If I heard you right, you aren't going to pursue an independent civil rights audit, but you are going to continue to release data and to consult with civil rights groups. I'd welcome a more thorough answer as to in which way having an independent outside audit would actually harm your transparency efforts.

Mr. Dorsey: (03:31:11 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

I don't mean it would harm it. I mean that we want to provide enough information so that people can do this work independently of us on their own timelines, and that's where we need to make our transparency report more robust. And as I said, we have regular conversations with these groups and take feedback regularly.

Senator Coons: (03:31:32 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

You do, Mr. Dorsey, have policies against deep fakes or manipulated media against COVID-19 misinformation, against things that violate civic integrity, but you don't have a standalone climate change misinformation policy. Why not?

Mr. Dorsey: (03:31:51 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

Well, misleading information, as you are aware, is a large problem. It's hard to define it completely and cohesively. We wanted to scope our approach to start to focus on the highest severity of harm. We focused on three areas, manipulated media, which you mentioned, civic integrity around the election, specifically in public health, specifically around COVID. We wanted to make sure that our resources that we have have the greatest impact on where we believe the greatest severity of harm is going to be. Our policies are living documents. They will evolve. We will add to them, but we thought it important that we focus our energies and prioritize the work as much as we could.

Senator Coons: (03:32:41 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12761.93\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12761.93))

Well, Mr. Dorsey, I'll close with this. I cannot think of a greater harm than climate change, which is transforming literally our planet and causing harm to our entire world. I think we're experiencing significant harm as we speak. I recognize the pandemic and misinformation about COVID-19, manipulated media also cause harm, but I'd urge you to reconsider that because helping to disseminate climate denialism, in my view, further facilitates and accelerates one of the greatest existential threats to our world. So thank you to both of our witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Graham: (03:33:17 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12797.97\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12797.97))

Senator Ernst.

Senator Ernst: (03:33:22 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12802.17\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12802.17))

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Mr. Zuckerberg and Mr. Dorsey, thank you both for being here with us today virtually and for your commitment to constantly improving the way your platforms are serving people across the country. There has been a lot of talk today. Many of us have been listening from our offices or online about the censorship of ideas and news on your platforms, and these are the things that have been at the forefront of American's minds in the lead up to the election, as well as the week since our 2020 general election. The people that I hear from, of course, believe that conservatives were wrongfully being silenced while those on the left that were given basically free reign of your platforms. One of the points of contention that is often brought up is that you do recruit heavily from California, which leads to your employee base skewing quite heavily to the left.

Senator Ernst: (03:34:28 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12868.04\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12868.04))

So my first question is for both of you. Do you have concerns about your ability to monitor disinformation on both sides of the political aisle equally, given that the majority of your employees typically do lean towards the more progressive side? And again, to both of you, have you taken any steps then at all to make your employee base more representative of the country as a whole when it comes to political affiliation? And Mr. Zuckerberg, if we could start with you, please.

Mr. Zuckerberg: (03:35:08 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12908.66\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=12908.66))

Thank you, Senator. I think those are both really important topics. In terms of assessing what is misinformation, I think it's important that we don't become the deciders on everything that is true or false ourselves, which is why we've tried to build a program of independent fact checkers that we can work with on this, and those fact checkers are accredited not by us but by the independent Poynter Institute for journalism as part of the international fact-checking network, and it includes fact checkers that I think span the political spectrum, as well as I think the majority of them who would call themselves apolitical. So we've tried to address the issue of making sure that there isn't a bias in our actions by actually having us not be the deciders on that type of content ourselves. And to your second question about taking steps to diversify the employee base, we this is a sensitive area in that I don't think it would be appropriate for us to ask people on the way in as they were interviewing what their political affiliation is, which of course makes it hard to know. (silence).

Mr. Dorsey: (03:38:05 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=13085.6\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=13085.6))

Because we see what has happened. It's important for us to protect people and to protect human rights.

Senator Blackburn: (04:23:59 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15839.02\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15839.02))

Let me move to election content and that monitoring, because we do have concerns about some of the things that happen there. Mr. Zuckerberg, let me ask you this, have you heard of the Trump Accountability Project?

Mr. Zuckerberg: (04:24:23 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15863.43\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15863.43))

Senator, I'm not familiar with that.

Senator Blackburn: (04:24:25 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15865.68\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15865.68))

That is a project that is an attempt to blacklist Americans who have served in the Trump administration and to prohibit them from gaining future employment. Now in communist China, in Putin's Russia, in totalitarian states, the government regularly will issue a blacklist on their enemies. Enemies of the state are banned from getting a job and if their names fall on the blacklist, they are out.

Senator Blackburn: (04:24:55 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15895.01\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15895.01))

This seems disturbing that it would be happening here in this country. So Mr. Zuckerberg, do you agree with me there is seriously something wrong with an un-American blacklist tarring people from future employment simply because they belong to a different political party?

Mr. Zuckerberg: (04:25:22 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15922.35\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15922.35))

Senator, I generally agree that people should not be discriminated against because of political beliefs.

Senator Blackburn: (04:25:30 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15930.9\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15930.9))

Okay, that is a positive step. Now on Facebook, I wrote in a post, and I'm quoting, "The Trump Accountability Project is the epitome of the cancel culture. Our nation has long benefited from robust political debate and this effort to silence those who support our president is vile."

Senator Blackburn: (04:25:56 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15956.29\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=15956.29))

As you can tell from this statement, nothing was said about the election or the results, either directly or indirectly, but somehow I got slapped with your elections flag sticker. So what each of you need to realize, and you've heard it time and again today you, say you don't keep lists. Obviously you have lists. Because there are some of us who are regularly censored and called down by your content moderators. Do we want to see these lists? Yes. How have you built these lists? We want to know.

Senator Blackburn: (04:26:46 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16006.05\)](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTsicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkjpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16006.05))

I would remind each of you, you are a Title 1 service, you are an information service. You are to be the new public square. But what you are doing with your power that you have derived because federal law gave you the ability to stand up and grow without being hit by lawsuits, you have used this power to run amuck. You have used it to silence conservatives. You have used it to build your lists. You have used this power to act like you hold all the power. That you can make these decisions. You have driven this cancel

culture, because you have not called to account your moderators. You have refused to take responsibility for your employees and their actions, so thereby reigning you in on the issues of privacy, data security, content moderation, liability protections, defining who is a publisher in the virtual space, that is up to us, because you have proven you do not have the will, the strength, the ability, and you will not accept the responsibility to do it for yourselves. I yield my time.

Mr. Graham: (04:28:21 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16101.47)

Thank you very much, Senator Blackburn. To the two witnesses, you made it through. Thank you. Hopefully we'll understand a little bit better about where the committee's at and our concerns. I want to thank you for appearing. I wish we could do it in person, but I can understand why we had to do it remotely.

Mr. Graham: (04:28:41 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16121.94)

We will have more hearings coming up in the next Congress, I'm sure, to try to find ways to modify 230 to deal with some of the issues that were brought before the committee. I just want to thank you both and just say that you have been hugely successful in ways probably beyond your own imagination, and we've got problems around your platforms that have to be dealt with, and we will do it, hopefully, collaboratively.

Mr. Graham: (04:29:08 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16148.51)

The bottom line is we want to make these platforms better. We want to continue to grow this part of our society responsibly. And right now, without regulation or without lawsuit is pretty much becoming the wild wild west. And I appreciate both of you for being willing to try to find ways to come up with systems that will ensure more transparency, more choice, and more confidence.

Senator Blumenthal: (04:29:40 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16180.22)

Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Graham: (04:29:40 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16180.99)

Yes, sir?

Senator Blumenthal: (04:29:42 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16182.73)

If I may just add my thanks to the witnesses and also to you for having this hearing. I think there's one certainty here, which is that Mr. Zuckerberg and Mr. Dorsey will be back. They will be back in the next session of Congress. I hope that joining them will be Google and Amazon and others who should be held similarly accountable.

Mr. Graham: (04:30:09 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16209.57)

I agree. To these two companies, thank you for stepping up to the plate, and to the other companies, you need to be here also.

Senator Blumenthal: (04:30:17 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8al8JWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BS0?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16217.63)

I, again, thank them. And we need to have greater accountability by reducing the shield. It's now nearly complete. And I want to thank you, Senator Graham, for working with me on the EARN IT Act, a number of our colleagues have raised the problem with

child sexual abuse material. Best way to counter it is to act. We're really serious about all this rhetoric and the jumble of grievances that we've heard. Let's begin the journey with a single step. We can do it through the EARN IT Act. It's on the floor of the United States Senate having been reported unanimously out of this committee. Let's have a vote.

Mr. Graham: (04:31:02 (<https://www.rev.com/transcript>)

[https://www.rev.com/services](editor/shared/qe7Kc1_8aI8jWOTcicE7plc63qbN5Y59N2ZEXxk0_EVTEes7mHP_NkJpyZemhawOyRYIEU1PZ5rNzdAbUJvqAM23BSo?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=16262.26))

Agreed. Change is going to come. Thank you. The hearing is adjourned.

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